

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING  
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2022  
MEMORIAL BUILDING  
20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

**Select Board**

Eric Remick, Chair  
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane  
Elizabeth Dow  
Shari Cornish  
Danny Hale

**Others Present**

David Upson, Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager  
Mike Henry, Interim Police Chief - *Zoom*  
Tom Fadden – Road Foreman  
Michael Ambrosino, HED

**Others Present**

Kristine Burke  
Jessie Upson  
Stephen Fortmann  
Margaret deRivera

**Regular Meeting**

**6:00 P.M.** – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

**6:00 P.M.** – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add an Executive Session to include Town Manager for a personnel matter

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the adjusted agenda as stated.*

**6:01 P.M.** – Communication from the audience - *none*

**6:01 P.M. – 6:02 P.M.** Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of September 1, 2022

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of September 1, 2022, as written. Ceilidh abstained.*

**6:02 P.M. – 6:11 P.M.** Town Manager’s Report– Given by David Upson

David updated us on the wastewater project, specifically the lagoon clean-out and progress of relining the Lagoon liner. David talked briefly about the downtown paving project, line striping and parking spaces. There was some brief discussion about the parking spots in the Village. David is trying to save as many as possible.

David gave an update on the Davis gravel pit where test holes were done recently. The Town is exploring the possibility of purchasing the gravel pit – we are in the research stages. A full report will be given to the Select Board at a future meeting. The plan would be to have a vote at Town meeting after the decision to move forward has been made.

David reported that a test email for the email alert system was sent on September 6. If you are signed up and did not receive it, please notify the Town Manager’s office.

See attachments for full report.

**6:11 P.M. – 6:18 P.M. Road Foreman Report– Given by Tom Fadden**

Tom reported that they finished the upper side of the Church St sidewalks today. The sidewalks are now wider and ADA compliant.

The crew did a good amount of brush clearing with the two tractors that the Town rented. They were able to do Ward Hill, Mountainview Rd., Montgomery Rd. parts of Center Rd., Bunker Hill Rd. some of West Hill and some in the Village. We are getting one tractor again for a full week October 10 to continue this work.

Tom reported that they had one sewer issue on the West end of Town, and they put the Glenside pump back together.

Tom let us know that Montgomery Rd. is tore up for repaving. (Center Rd. side). Paving is going to be sometime in October.

The wall by the Hardwick Inn building caved in earlier this Summer. It was fixed this week by the company that was doing the stormwater project on North Main St. Since they had an excavator large enough to do it, we had them fix it while they were here to save on equipment mobilization costs. They added some blocks and fixed the ones that had shifted.

**6:18 P.M. – 6:27 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Interim Police Chief Mike Henry**

Mike wanted to make everyone aware the Hardwick Police Department does finger printing right here in Hardwick. People don't have to drive all the way to Montpelier.

Mike shared that the Police Dept. is working on integrating Officers into the schools. For example, Officer Rossi had lunch with the kids at the Elementary School, while Officers Barnard and Officer Force were going to be doing this at the high school. They are trying to get to know kids and make it so people aren't so concerned when they see police cars up there. They want to have more of a regular presence, rather than just when something happens.

Mike talked about moving the battery-operated speed signs around more frequently. He wants to work with Tom for the poles that they need to be placed.

Special Investigation Unit (SIU) cases are being fielded through Hardwick Police, rather than Vermont State Police (VSP) as it used to be. Mike has been in communication with VSP and others about this because currently he is having to do all this case work with the absence of a detective in the department. David and Mike both indicated that we need to continue to work on this because it's not feasible for Mike to do all the investigations as the acting Chief. He and David are continuing to talk to State Rep's about this.

Ceilidh suggested Hardwick Farms or Montgomery Rd. for a pole for the speed signs.

**6:27 P.M. – 6:35 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report - Given by Michael Ambrosino**

Michael reported that the annual safety inspection at the Caspian Dam was completed, and no issues were found.

Michael also reported that they have started to feel the effects of the global energy crisis, as their purchased power is \$96,000 over budget. This is because they are having to buy power from the market. They are looking at other

methods for getting and keeping power, specifically battery storage capacity where they could retain excess power that they generate and keep it. Elizabeth noted that she has seen a lot of solar panels going up in the Town and asked if that helps the Electric Department at all. Michael indicated that this power is more expensive for them than buying it in the market.

Michael did note that the H-11 solar project generated 1.6M Kwh this year which saved them about \$125,000 of purchased power.

Michael reported that HED is slightly over budget in their revenue, which does help some with the more expensive power costs they have been seeing. Not only is purchased power costing them more than expected, but supply costs are up significantly with some items up 200% and they can take months to get.

Elizabeth asked about the federal dollars for EV chargers and asked if HED has investigated this. Michael indicated that they have a little, but that a lot of the money is going to private companies. It hasn't been as much of a priority.

It was mentioned that a joint meeting with HED and the Select Board is due for this Fall. The Town Manager's office will look at dates. One hour prior to the October 20 Select Board meeting may be an option.

**6:35 P.M. – 6:36 P.M.** Item #1 Select Board to designate the Town Manager as our voting delegate for the annual meetings of VLCT, PACIF and VERB

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to appoint David Upson as the Town's voting delegate for the annual meetings of VLCT, PACIF and VERB.*

**6:36 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.** Item #2 Kristine Burke and Jessie Upson to provide update on the Community Center project

Kristine and Jessie were present to talk about the Hardwick Community Collaboration Council pilot program that they have come up with. It is in the early stages of development, but they are looking for Town support not just financially, but to get behind them to help people in need. The HCCC would have a goal of connecting with community members, family, and organizations to facilitate finding their "feel good" place in the community. They envision the Sr. Center side of the Police Station as being the hub where this could all come together.

Kristine discussed survival mode and how unhealthy this can be and affects a person's behavior. Kristine talked about why people who are in survival mode costs our community dollars, moral, etc. and a sense of community. These people tend to utilize more police, rescue, and other public resources, etc. She talked about how the HCCC plans to assist in improving this situation with collaboration from human services agencies, the Town, volunteers, and some limited staff.

One of the first things that would like to get started is purchasing software which would allow group spaces, email, and text capabilities. It would be known as "*Your Greater Hardwick Community Hub.*"

David has investigated getting high speed internet as a separate network up at the Police Station. We could use some of the opioid settlement money to get that started. We can also utilize grant funds. There are several offices in the building that could be set up with computers or tablets for people to do telehealth appointments

that they might not be otherwise able to attend.

See attachments for the full presentation from Kristine and Jessie about the idea around this pilot program.

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to use \$3500 of ARPA funds to help the HCCC purchase the software they need to get started on this project.*

**7:00 P.M. – 7:15 P.M.** Item #3 Cannabis Control Commission (currently the Select Board) to consider approving a cultivator's license for Daniel Baumann

David gave some background on how the process is going to work with the new system. In this case, the State approved this individual's license subject to local approval. The individual has completed a zoning permit with the Town.

The Select Board wants a copy of the zoning permit before they decide. This is the first one that has come through and they want to have a clear understanding of the process and their role. This will be tabled until the next meeting.

Stephen Fortmann spoke up to say that there are four people interested in being a member of the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). One being him and the others are Kasey Potter, Jason Bahner, and the Hazen High School nurse. They would also like a representative from the Hardwick Police Dept. The people who want to be on the CCC should send a formal letter or email to the Town Manager to express their interest in being on the CCC and then come to the next meeting for appointment.

**7:15 P.M. – 7:25 P.M.** Item #4 Business Manager to present the proposed FY23 water and sewer rates for the Select Board to consider approving

The Business Manager presented the proposed water and sewer rates for FY23. We are not making a lot of structure changes this year. One note is that the "commercial low user" rate category should have been changed to 8,000 gallons per quarter to mirror the residential allotment of 8,000 that was changed last year. This change will be implemented this year. We did find in FY22 that the overage usage revenue increased with the change to an 8,000-gallon quarterly allotment. We reviewed the revenues we took in for overage in the prior year and we are budgeting for an amount of overage similar to last year in both categories. Since we saw an increase in overage revenue, this will enable us to lower the base rate by a small amount. For example, the residential base rate will come down by \$30/year. We always strive to simply meet the expenses of the fund. Water expenses are budgeted at \$303,988 and sewer expenses at \$480,851. We anticipate that we can raise these amounts with the rates we have set. See the meeting attachments for the complete details of the proposed rates.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY23 Water rates, as presented.*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY23 Sewer rates, as presented.*

**Select Board Reports:** Shari shared that tomorrow night (Friday, September 16) is the first of two "Story Telling Events" at the Town House. Stories will be in 5-minute increments. The event will be from 7:30-9:00 p.m. October 7 is the second event.

Elizabeth shared that the Hardwick Historical Society (HHS) is having a chicken barbecue fundraiser on Saturday, October 1 from noon – 2:00 (or until sold out). Tickets are \$15/dinner. It includes a half chicken, potato, coleslaw, and roll. Take-out only. It is recommended to buy advance tickets because it does often sell out. To purchase tickets, contact Elizabeth via town email (on website) or the email on the HHS website.

The Hardwick Historical Society (HHS) is hosting a Tour of the Center Cemetery Sunday, September 18 at 3:00 p.m. The tour guide will show some unique stones and explore the history of the cemetery. The same individual is going to be speaking at the Depot on Monday at 7:00 p.m. It's a "Tombstone Twofer."

Eric reported that the Yellow Barn project is continuing to move forward. They are hoping for a rebid mid to late October. A regional representative from the Economic Development Authority (EDA) recently visited and EDA has given their blessing on the new design that was scaled down to meet the budget.

**New Business:** *none*

**Old Business:** A reminder that a date for the joint HED and Select Board meeting needs to be set. The Town Manager will work on that.

Ceilidh asked for an update on the survey for the Carey Rd. property. Davis has someone lined up for June 2023 which is the soonest someone is available. David had a conversation with NEK Bent about splitting the costs of upgrading the property water and sewer, etc., then leasing it until the project was completed, then it could be sold, and the Town could split the profits. This is an idea that the Town could consider, but it hasn't been discussed in detail yet.

Reminder about the upcoming Select Board Retreat on October 12. The Business Manager asked if the retreat was going to be budget focused and if so, it might be too early on this date. The Board did not intend for this to be budget focused, so the date can stay October 12. An agenda will be forthcoming as the date nears.

**7:36 P.M** *Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.*

**7:43 PM.** Exited Executive Session. No action taken.

**7:44 P.M.** Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair